

BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON CHAYEI SARAH - 5763

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Mazal tov to Rabbi Jonathan Schwartz, assistant rabbi of Fifth Avenue Synagogue and author of the Internet Chaburah, and his wife Tammy, on the birth of a baby girl - Eliana Leah - on Sunday night.

[Drasha from last year]
RABBI ELI SHULMAN
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Parshas Chayei Sarah 5762

My oldest daughter is in high school now. And the bane of her life is tests. It seems that every other day she has another test, to prepare for which all her free time is required.

But she doesn't hate her teachers for it. Because she knows that all these tests have a purpose; they're not an end in their own right. She's not just taking test for the sake of test taking. Not at all; she needs to take all these tests, she knows, for a higher goal; so that ultimately she will be well prepared for - Regents.

I mention this because the subject of tests comes up naturally when we talk about Avraham Avinu. Avraham Avinu also had to take a lot of tests. Asarah Nisyonos, the Mishnah says, were given to Avraham - the last of these, according to Rabbeinu Yonah, being the difficulties he encountered in this week's Parsha burying Sara. And he passed all of them.

It's interesting that we don't find the same focus on tests in regard to the other Avos. Certainly none of the Avos had easy lives; Yaakov's life, especially, was filled with tragedy. But it is only in Avraham's life - as understood by Chazal - that the idea of Nisayon (test) looms so large. Even the Akeidah, in which Yitzchock took such a central part, is described as a Nisayon of Avraham's, rather than of Yitzchock. Indeed, the Torah itself indicates that it was Avraham's Nisayon; because after the Akeidah Hashem appears to Avraham - and not to Yitzchak - and says: Atah Yadati Ki Yerei Elokim Atah.

Somehow, it seems, it was particularly Avraham who required testing. Why should that be?

I once heard from a great man, that Hashem doesn't give someone a Nisayon unless he knows he can pass it. And that seems difficult to understand. If Hashem knows that he can pass the test then what is the purpose of the test in the first place?

Actually, our translation of Nisayon as test is not really accurate. The word Nisayon, the Meforshim explain, is related to Nes, a pole, which is used to elevate something - as in Aseh Lichah Nachas Visim Oso Al Nes. And so a Nes is an event, a trial, whose purpose is to elevate the person undergoing it.

A person may be born with the great potential. But that doesn't mean that he was born great. No one is born great; at most, he may be born with great potential. That potential has to be realized, and it can be realized only by the force and the press of circumstance.

The greatest world leader of the twentieth century, perhaps the largest person - at least in the non-Jewish world - of the twentieth century, was, perhaps, Winston Churchill. Churchill was undoubtedly born with tremendous gifts, both intellectual and moral. But had he not been

called upon to lead England in its hour of trial, that greatness would never have been fully tapped; not only would it have remained hidden; it would not have existed, except in unrealized potential.

A Nisayon is not a test, but a trial; a critical event which causes that untapped potential to be transformed into reality.

And so the purpose of the Akeidah, for example, was not to discover whether or not Avraham Avinu was a Yerei Shamayim, even to the degree that the Akeidah demanded. Hashem didn't need a test to discover that, anyway; He could have simply looked into Avraham's heart. The purpose of the Akeidah, rather, was to raise Avraham to the level of the Akeidah; to take the potential with him, and bring it to fulfillment and realization.

Perhaps that is why it is particularly in regard to Avraham, more than to any of the other Avos, that the concept of Nisayon is so central.

Avraham Avinu was born into a pagan family. His life's story is a story of transformation; perhaps the most incredible transformation the world has ever seen - from pagan child to the father of monotheism, the unique figure who transfigured all of history.

The other Avos, who followed Avraham, each staked out their own path in Avodas Hashem. But, nonetheless, they were born on the mountain. They weren't required to transform themselves in that radical sense that Avraham had to.

And so, more than any of the other Avos, Avraham had to be elevated - transformed - into greatness. And that required Nisyonos. Through the force of the Nisyonos the greatness within him was brought to the surface, and realized.

It is also significant that Chazal speak of ten Nisyonos. Because ten represents, in the thought of Chazal, a complete Shiur Komah, a complete set. (Thus, for example, the world was created with ten Maamaros, utterances; and the Luchos, of course, contained ten Dibros.) So that what Chazal are indicating is that Avraham Avinu's entire spiritual stature was built up through these ten successive Nisyonos.

Klal Yisrael today, especially in Eretz Yisrael but around the world, as well, are experiencing a Nisayon. We don't seek Nisyonos. We say in davening each day: Al Tivieni... Lidei Nisayon. But when Nisyonos come it is valuable to realize that their purpose is not to test us. G-d doesn't need to test us. The purpose of a Nisayon is to change us; to elevate us; to bring to fulfillment the capacity for Emuna and Bitachon, for calm and unquestioning trust in the Ribono Shel Olam, that we have inherited from Avraham Avinu, in whose footsteps we follow. And ultimately the purpose of this Nisayon, as of all Nisyonos, is to transform us; each of us, individually, all of us as a people, and ultimately - through us - to transform the world, into a place where Hashem's presence and kingship will be felt and acknowledged by all, Vihaya Hashem Limelech Al Kol Haaretz Bayom Hahuh Yehiye Hashem Echad Ushemo Echad.

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org]
"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Chayei Sarah

The Reciprocal Nature of Personal Providence

When Avraham came to purchase a grave site from Efron the Chittite, for his wife, Sarah, the Torah says "Efron was sitting (yoshev - present tense) among the people of Ches" [Bereshis 23:10]. However, the verb 'yoshev' is written 'defectively' without the letter vov. It could thus be read as he (just) sat down (yoshav - past tense).

Rashi notes that the reason for this spelling is to teach us a hidden meaning. On this very day that Avraham came to negotiate with Efron, Efron had been appointed governor of the city council. He rose to power and began his reign, so to speak, on that very day. Why was this necessary? Rashi tells us, "because of the importance of Avraham, he arose to leadership."

Until that day, Efron was just another citizen of the town. It would be beneath Avraham's dignity to haggle over a piece of real estate with 'just any Joe'. Therefore, G-d interfered and had Efron appointed to a position of authority and power so that when Avraham came into town

to purchase a burial plot, he would be dealing with the town's most respected citizen.

What is this Rashi really saying? Do we really think that Avraham Avinu - who just lost his wife -- gave a moment's thought to the status of the person with whom he would have to negotiate to purchase a burial plot? Does it make sense that G-d Himself should need to get involved in the local Chittite politics so that Avraham should not have to deal with a low level real estate broker? This was the last thing in the world that Avraham was worried about at that moment!

And yet, we learn from Chazal that G-d did feel it was worth the 'effort' to intervene in the local election and bring Efron to power for the sake of Avraham's honor.

Rav Eliya Meir Bloch quotes from his father that we learn a very basic principle in the concept of personal Providence (hashgocha pratis) from this incident. Hashgocha pratis is a very difficult and a very misunderstood concept. Liberally translated, it means that G-d intervenes in the lives of people. It means that He is personally interested in my life and He will interfere on my behalf.

Most people only mention this idea when something 'big' happens in their lives. We often hear it mentioned regarding finding one's marriage partner. In this instance, it is quite common to hear people say "This was 'Hashgocha' [Providence]".

What does 'Hashgocha pratis' really mean? Is it 'Hashgocha pratis' if I find a parking space right next to the entrance of the supermarket? Or does Hashgocha pratis only apply to big things in life, like finding a job or finding a spouse? Is it reserved for such things as 'major illness', or are mosquito bites also 'Hashgocha pratis'?

The answer is that it all depends on the person. Our Sages tell us that Divine Providence is like a shadow. "The L-rd is your shadow upon your right hand" [Tehillim 121:5]. The relationship that He has with us is like that of a shadow. If I raise my hand, my shadow raises its hand. If I lift my foot, the shadow lifts its foot.

A person determines the amount of involvement that G-d will have in his life. If G-d is a major factor in my life then G-d WILL BECOME a major factor in my life, correspondingly. To the extent that my actions are determined by G-d and G-d plays a role in my life, to that extent, that which happens to me will be determined by G-d and I will play a role in His 'life', so to speak.

It is possible for G-d to be intimately engaged in every step of our lives -- even in the smallest details which are basically irrelevant to us -- if we have made G-d intimate in our own lives.

It did not make a difference if Avraham was at all perturbed whether he would be dealing with Efron the Governor or Efron the simple citizen. Avraham was on such a high spiritual level that G-d was 'personally' concerned with whom Avraham had to deal. Avraham was so intimately involved with G-d that G-d personally took care of even the minutia of this righteous person's life.

"Reward" versus "Merit": A Cryptic Baal HaTurim Analyzes Eliezer's Prayer

There is an interesting but difficult Baal HaTurim on the verse "And he said, "Hashem, G-d of my master Avraham, may You arrange it for me this day that You do kindness with my master Avraham (v'asay chessed im Adoni Avraham)" [Bereshis 24:12]. The Baal HaTurim states that the last letters of the last three words of the pasuk (im Adoni Avraham) spell 'mayim - mem yud mem' [water]. The Baal HaTurim extrapolates into Eliezer's words "in reward for 'Please take a bit of water' [18:4] (where Avraham offered a bit of water to the Angels at the beginning of last week's parsha), please answer me by the water". Eliezer made a deal with G-d. The deal was that the woman who would bring him water and also offer water to his camels would be the woman he would pick to be Yitzchak's wife. Eliezer prayed that G-d in fact give this sign as a reward for Avraham's offering water to the Angels (who he thought were common wayfarers).

The Baal HaTurim points out that if we do not only look at the last three words of the pasuk (im Adoni Avraham) but also at the previous four words (chedsed im Adoni Avraham), the last letters of those four words spell 'domim' - daled mem yud mem [blood]. This alludes to a request by Eliezer that he be answered by virtue of the merit of the blood of the

Akeidah [Binding of Yitzchak] in which Avraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Yitzchak to obey G-d's command.

The Sefer Kishutei Torah discusses this Baal HaTurim and raises the following powerful question: Eliezer had two 'merits' of Avraham to offer as justification that G-d should answer his prayers. One merit was the Binding of Yitzchak and the other merit was the fact that he offered water to guests. These, however, would seem to be totally incommensurate merits. Why even bring up the offering of water when the merit of the Akeidah is available? After all, on Rosh HaShanah, when we invoke the merit of the Akeidah, we do not mention the merit of the water offered to the Angels. In all our prayers, the merit of the 'Akeidah' is always our 'ace in the hole'. Yet, here Eliezer asks to be answered in merit of the water. The Akeida is almost like an afterthought. Why?

The Kishutei Torah notes that the Baal HaTurim chose his words carefully. Regarding mentioning the merit of offering the water, the Baal HaTurim says "b'schar" [in reward for]. Regarding mentioning the Akeida, the Baal HaTurim merely says "b'zechus" [in the merit of]. There is no question that in terms of 'zechus', in terms of acts of greatness, the 'Binding of Yitzchak' was a far more important act than that of offering water to the guests. But there is something about doing a chessed [kindness] for another human being that creates an indebtedness by the Master of the World. When we do favors for our fellow man, G-d 'owes us one', so to speak.

Fulfillment of commandments between man and G-d (such as Akeidas Yitzchak) is a great thing. It establishes merit. However it does not make G-d 'indebted' to us. The only thing that makes G-d indebted to us, as it were, is if we go out of our way to help another person. This creates an 'indebtedness' by G-d.

This is why the Baal HaTurim said, "in reward for" the offering of the bit of water. Eliezer was asking to be paid off. When we pray before G-d and ask to be "paid back" for our actions, the most effective "line of credit" we can present is not our fulfillment of commandments between man and G-d, but fulfillment of the commandments between man and man. The fact that Avraham put himself out and gave of his own for the benefit of someone else, creates -- as it were -- a debt by G-d such that when the chips were down, Eliezer could pray to "cash in" that good deed and ask for "pay back".

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dhoffman@torah.org These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #348 Determining the Salary of the Shadchan. Tapes or a complete catalog can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 203 Baltimore, MD 21208

From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: Oct 29, 2002 Subject: Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky - True Chessed
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RABBI ZVI SOBOLOFSKY
TRUE CHESSED

The Talmud, in Maseches Kiddushin (2a), compares the acquisition of a burial plot for Sarah to the halachic method of marriage. Just as land is purchased with money, so too, one method of marrying someone involves the giving of money or an object of value from a man to a woman. What is the meaning of this comparison? How can the purchase of a burial plot be the model for the marriage ceremony? The most important character trait necessary for a successful marriage is chessed. Most of Parshas Chayei Sarah focuses on Eliezer's search for a wife for Yitzchak. It is Rivka's excellent performance of chessed that qualifies her as one fitting to marry Yitzchak. Chessed can be performed for two reasons. Some give to others with the hope that they will receive something in return. A higher form of

chessed involves giving without any ulterior motive, without hope of receiving something in return. We are required to perform acts of chessed, in emulation of Hashem's ways. Just as He visits the sick, feeds the poor, and cares for everyone's needs, so too are we commanded to follow His path. Hashem's acts of chessed constitute the higher form because there is no way for us to return such acts. Chazal refer to the prototype of chessed with absolutely no ulterior motive as "chessed shel emes" - true loving kindness – the ultimate act of which is caring for the dead. It is this model of chessed that is portrayed by the purchase of a burial plot for Sarah as Avraham had nothing to gain in return. It is this chessed shel emes that serves as the model for eternity for the chessed done between husband and wife. Partners in marriage may tend to be kind to each other because they will receive kindness in return. The Torah stresses that the correct mindset for caring for one's spouse is to give for the sake of giving, not for the sake of receiving. At the beginning of every Jewish marriage, as the kiddushin are performed, the image of Avraham caring for Sarah is conjured up. Parshas Chayei Sarah is truly the parsha that teaches us the secret of marriage. Avraham and Rivka's acts of chessed guide us through marriage as we perfect ourselves as givers in the true sense of the word.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2001/parsha/rsac_chayeySara.html
TorahWeb from last year
RABBI YONASAN SACKS
TEACHING TORAH VALUES

Perhaps the most difficult challenge we face as parents and educators is how to effectively transmit Torah values and ethics. The Torah ascribes greatness to Avraham Avinu because of his ability to communicate these moral teachings. "Ki yedativ lemaan asher yetzaveh es banav, ve'es bisso acharav veshamru derech Hashem laasos tzedakah umishpat," (Bereishis 18:19). Accordingly, the Ran (Derashot HaRan, derashah 5) explains Avraham's insistence that the wife of Yitzchak be chosen from Charan rather than from Canaan. Avraham's rejection of Canaan was not predicated upon their idolatrous practices, for his extended family in Charan served idols as well. Rather, as the Ran explains, Avraham's objection to the Canaanim was based on his familiarity with their flawed moral character. As difficult as it is to disseminate Torah knowledge, molding and developing a Torah personality is an even more formidable challenge. Hence, the prime concern of Avraham Avinu was that his daughter-in-law embody ethical and moral excellence. The Kil Yakar emphasizes the need to create an encompassing environment conducive to Torah life. Citing the pasuk, "Asher lo tikach ishah livni mibnos hacanaani asher anochi yoshev bekirbo," (Bereishis 24:3). The Kli Yakar questions Avraham's need to stress "asher anochi yoshev bekirbo," -among whom I dwell. The Kli Yakar explains that Avraham's concern was the potentially negative impact of an improper environment. Were Yitzchak's wife to be chosen from Canaan, the very place where she would continue to live throughout her married life, she would constantly be subjected to the pressures and influences of her youth. Avraham therefore insisted that her family not live in Canaan. Yet, how can we cultivate and nurture this sense of ethics and morality so vital to effective chinuch? The Gemora explains (Sotah 3a) that "R'Chaim, son of R'Chaninah further said: What is the meaning of the verse 'You should walk after the Lord your G-d'? Is it possible for a human being to walk after the shechinah? Has it not been said, 'For the Lord your G-d is a devouring fire'? Rather, the meaning is to follow the attributes of Hashem ..the Holy One Blessed be He visited the sick, as it is said, 'And Hashem appeared to him at Elonei Mamreh.' So shall you visit the sick." Unlike most mitzvos, which are generally conveyed through imperatives and instruction, moral and ethical tenets are taught by example. Instead of commanding us directly to visit the sick and comfort those who mourn, the Torah records how Hashem performs such deeds and implores His people to do the same - acharei Hashem elokeichem teileichu.

Our mandate v'halachta bidrachav - to follow in His ways - requires of each of us to convey and transmit the substance and beauty of Torah in a similar way - to teach and impart Torah values by example, not merely through instruction.

<http://www.tanach.org/breishit/chaya.txt>
RABBI MENACHEM LEIBTAG
THE TANACH STUDY CENTER / <http://www.tanach.org> In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag
PARSHAT CHAYEI SARAH - A WIFE FROM 'TOLDOT TERACH'
"YI'CHUS" [family lineage] has always been an important consideration when selecting one's spouse. Nevertheless, Avraham's insistence that his 'chosen' son marry specifically a descendant of his brother NACHOR requires explanation. In this week's shiur, we return to our discussion of the "toladot" in Sefer Breishit in order to answer this question.
INTRODUCTION As you surely must have noticed, the phrase "ayleh TOLDOT..." appears numerous times in Sefer Breishit. In our shiur on Parshat Noach, we explained how these "toldot" [genealogies] form the 'backbone' of Sefer Breishit. In that shiur, we also explained how Sefer Breishit divided into two distinct sections. The first eleven chapters included three units that began with "toldot"; each unit containing a primary story relating to G-d's disappointment with mankind's behavior: his failure in Gan Eden (2->4,) the punishment of Dor Ha'MABUL (5->9), and the story of Migdal Bavel and the consequent dispersion of mankind into seventy nations (10->11). At that point, the second section began as the focus of the Sefer shifts to G-d's choice of Avraham Avinu to become the forefather of His model nation [what we refer to as the "bechira" process]. This section begins with "toldot Shem" (see 11:10) and continues all the way until the story of "toldot Yaakov" (see 37:2) and the selection of ALL his offspring to become - Am Yisrael - G-d's special nation. We begin our shiur by noting the significance of "toldot Terach" within this succession of "toldot" in Sefer Breishit. Afterward, we will show how this may allude to the importance of his offspring as well.
CHARTING THE TOLADOT The following chart illustrates the progression of these "toladot" in Sefer Breishit. The chart lists the names that follow the phrase "eyleh toldot..." , and highlights the parallel in their progression in each of the two sections described above. [The '*' star symbol represents the phrase "ayleh toldot...".] Study this chart carefully.

SEFER BREISHIT - UNITS OF "AYLEH TOLDOT..."

CHAPTERS 1->11	CHAPTERS 11->50
=====	=====
* ADAM (see 5:1)	* SHEM (see 11:10)
ten generations to:	ten generations to:
* NOACH (6:9)	* TERACH (11:27)
3 sons:	3 sons:
Shem, Cham, & Yefet	Avraham, Haran, & Nachor
	* YISHMAEL/25:12-rejected
* BNEI NOACH (10:1)	* YITZCHAK (26:1)
	* ESAV /36:1- rejected
	* YAAKOV (37:1-2)
70 nations (10:1-32)	70 "nefesh" become God's Nation

As you study this chart, note how the chart divides according to the two sections described above. Note also how the "bechira" process includes a "dechiya" [rejection] stage together with each "bechira" stage. Finally, note how each section concludes with seventy! [Additional parallels will be noted as we continue.]

'TEN GENERATIONS' - TWICE! As the chart shows, each 'half' begins with a detailed listing of 'ten generations' - 5:1-32 (Adam to Noach) & 11:10-26 (Shem to Terach), respectively. This indicates that the story of Avraham's "bechira" actually begins with "toldot SHEM." [As we explained in previous shiurim, the significance of Avraham's descent from Shem lies in his future destiny - to call out b'SHEM HASHEM.] Strikingly, this structural parallel extends beyond the similarity of the ten-generation unit. The conclusion of each list - the families of Noach and Terach - bear remarkable resemblance to one another: * Toldot ADAM concludes with NOACH, after which we find TOLDOT NOACH, i.e. the story of his 3 sons SHEM, CHAM, & YEFET. [See 5:28-32; 6:9!]

* TOLDOT SHEM concludes with TERACH, after which we find TOLDOT TERACH, i.e. the story of his 3 sons AVRAM, NACHOR, & HARAN. [See 11:24-26; 11:27!]

Furthermore, the sons of both Noach and Terach receive either a blessing or curse: * Avraham, like Shem, is blessed with the privilege of representing G-d. * Haran's son Lot, like Cham's son Canaan, is involved in a sin relating to incest. * Nachor's offspring Rivka, Rachel & Leah return to 'dwell within the tent' of the children of Avraham, just as Yefet is destined to dwell within the 'tent of SHEM'. [see 9:24-27 /"yaft Elokim l'Yefet v'yishkon b'ohalei Shem"] Even the meaning of these parallels requires further elaboration, for our purposes here, the parallel itself calls our attention to the significance of "toldot Terach." In fact, "toldot Terach" appears right where we would have expected to find a unit beginning with "toldot Avraham"! Even though we later find units that begin with "toldot Yitzchak" and "toldot Yaakov" [and even "toldot Yishmael" & "toldat Esav"], to our surprise we never find a unit that begins with "toldot Avraham"! Instead, at the precise spot where we would expect to find a unit beginning with "toldot Avraham," we find a unit that begins with "toldot Terach." This alone already hints to the fact that there must be something special about Terach. This observation also explains why Sefer Breishit dedicates so much detail to the story of Lot. Since the phrase "toldot Terach" forms the header for parshiot Lech Lecha, Va'yera and Chayei Sarah, this unit must include not only the story of Avraham, but the story of the children of Nachor and Haran (/Lot), as well. Thus, besides the life story of Avraham himself, these parshiot also contain: 1) Lot's decision to leave Avraham Avinu, preferring the 'good life' in Sdom (13:1-18). 2) Avraham's rescue of Lot (14:1-24) from the four kings. 3) G-d's sparing of Lot from the destruction of Sdom (19:1-24). 4) The birth of Lot's two sons - Ammon & Moav (19:30-38). 5) The 12 children of Nachor (22:20-24). [8 sons from his wife and 4 from his pilegish. (Sound familiar!)] 6) Avraham's marrying off his son to Nachor's granddaughter.

Hence, Parshat Chayei Sarah forms a most appropriate conclusion for this unit that began with "toldot Terach." Avraham makes a point of selecting a daughter-in-law specifically from the family of his brother, Nachor, thus bringing the history of "toldot Terach" full circle. As we will show in our shiur, all of Terach's offspring may have potential for "bechira." Therefore, if Yitzchak is to be married, his wife should be chosen from the family in which this potential lies. [Herein may also lie the reason why Nachor and Avraham themselves married 'within the family' - the daughters of Haran (see 11:29 and Rashi's identification of Yiskah as Sarah).]

WHY TERACH? What was so special about Terach that he 'deserves' his own "toldot"? It is really hard to say, as the Torah tells us so little about him. On the one hand, Sefer Yehoshua introduces Nachor as a 'card-carrying' idolater (see Yehoshua 24:2). Yet, as the end of Parshat Noach teaches us, Terach was the first person to recognize the spiritual importance of Eretz Canaan. He set out to 'make aliya' even BEFORE Hashem commanded Avraham to do so (see 11:31). [See Seforno's explanation of this pasuk (11:31). Ramban and Radak, however, explain Terach's 'aliya' much differently.]

Even though this may sound a bit too 'zionistic', one could suggest that Terach's merit lay simply in his having been the first person to move his family towards Eretz Canaan - considering that this is the ONLY detail we find in the Torah concerning Terach. [In the 'spirit' of "maase avot siman la'banim" - Terach could actually be considered the first 'Zionist' (in a modern day sense). Like any good Zionist, Terach plans to 'make aliya' and even encourages his family to do so, but he himself never makes it there!]

We may suggest, however, that Terach and his offspring may represent a different aspect of the "bechira" process - the potential to be chosen - if worthy. Terach's initiative in this regard may have granted the possibility of becoming part of 'chosen family' to any of his offspring who prove themselves deserving of this distinction. Avraham Avinu not only follows his father's lead and continues to Eretz Canaan, but also faithfully follows G-d's command throughout. He then becomes the progenitor of G-d's special nation. Nachor, however, stays behind. Lot (Haran's son) had the opportunity to remain with Avraham, but detaches himself by choosing the 'good life' in Kikar Ha'yarden (see shiur on Parshat Lech L'cha). However, Nachor's granddaughter, Rivka, and great-granddaughters, Rachel & Leah, prove themselves worthy of joining the distinctive nation, and work their way back into the family of Avraham. [This may explain the reason for the detailed story of how Rivka showed great hospitality when Eliezer arrived.]

Even though the "bechira" process at times may appear random and indiscriminate, the framework of "toldot Terach" may reflect the importance of personal commitment in earning that "bechira."

shabbat shalom menachem
FOR FURTHER IYUN

1. See Ramban on 15:18 where he beautifully review each of G-d's promises to Avraham Avinu in Parshat Lech L'cha, and the nature of their progression, and most important - how each additional promise reflected some type of reward to Avraham for his idealistic behavior. Relate this underlying concept behind this Ramban to the main points of the above shiur. See also Seforno on 26:5 in relation to G-d's promise to Yitzchak, and the need of the Avot to 'prove' that they were worthy of their "bechira".
2. 'Ten' generations - in our shiur, we noted that there were ten generations from ADAM to Noach, and ten as well from Shem to Terach. To be more precise, there are really ten from Noach to Avraham (as Pirkei Avot mentions) and there only eight from Shem to Terach, but we used the 'phrase' ten generation to reflect the common pattern of continuous list of a succession of toladot from one generation to the next beginning with one statement of "eyleh toldot" and ending with a final statement of "eyleh toldot". The parallel remains the same, for the sake of uniformity, we simply refer to this pattern as 'ten' generations.

3. TOLDOT AVRAHAM We saw earlier that every chosen individual in Sefer Breishit receives his own 'ayleh toldot' EXCEPT Avraham! If indeed the header "toldat" reflects this bechira process, then certainly Avraham himself deserves one. Yet, for some reason, the Torah includes the story of Avraham's "bechira" within the category of Toldot Terach. This enigma may suggest something unique about either Avraham's own "bechira" or his ability to have children (or both). In other words, Avraham's lack of "Toladot" [remember: literally, offspring] may relate to his infertility. He and Sarah have a child only after a long and exasperating process. Avraham and Sarah's names must be changed and a miracle must be performed simply for the child to be born. Even then, the process has yet to be completed - the child must return to Hashem at the Akeyda. Thus, the lack of any mention of 'Toldot Avraham' could reflect the difficult travails Avraham must endure in order to father and raise his child. [This may also explain why "Avraham HOLID et Yitzchak" is added to "ayleh Toldot Yitzchak."] Nonetheless, the question still remains stronger than the answer.

<http://www.tzemachdavid.org/thepracticaltorah/chayeisoroh.shtml>

THE PRACTICAL TORAH
BY RABBI MICHAEL TAUBES
Parshas Chayei Soroh:
RECITING SHEVA BERACHOS

No definitive Halacha LeMa'aseh conclusions should be applied to practical situations based on any of these Shiurim.

The Torah tells us that after Rivkah agreed to return with Avraham's servant to marry Yitzchak, her family gave her a Beracha as they sent her away (Bereishis 24:60). The Beraisa at the beginning of the first Perek of Masseches Kallah states that this Posuk is the source of our practice to recite the Birchas Chassanim, better known as the Sheva Berachos, at a wedding. We likewise read in Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer (Perek 16) that Rivkah's family stood and gave her a Beracha just as a Chazzan stands and recites Berachos in the presence of the Kallah under the Chupah. The Gemara there in Masseches Kallah (Perek 1 Ibid.) as well as in Kesubos (7b) cites other Pesukim which similarly hint at the practice of reciting these special Berachos.

The Mishnah in Megillah (23b) indicates that a Minyan of ten men is required in order to say these Berachos; the aforementioned Gemara in Kesubos (Ibid.) derives these points from the Pesukim as well. On the next page in Kesubos (8a) the Gemara states that the Chosson himself may be counted toward the Minyan. Rabbi Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz, in his Sefer Haflo'oh on Masseches Kesubos (Ibid. s.v. Kol Zeh), suggests that this may depend upon which Posuk is the actual source for requiring a Minyan altogether; the Shulchan Aruch, however, (Even HaEzer Siman 72 Sif 4) rules clearly that the Chosson may indeed be counted. The Netziv, in his commentary to the She'iltos (HaEmek Sheilah on Sheiltos 16 Ot 11), explains that the Chosson can be part of the Minyan because he too has an obligation to be "MiSameach" the Kallah, which apparently is accomplished by saying

these Berachos. However, the Mordechai in Kesubos (Siman 131, 1a) quotes from one of the Geonim that it is preferable that the Chosson himself not be the one to actually recite the Berachos.

The Gemara earlier in Kesubos (7b) states that these Berachos are recited not only at the wedding, but at every meal throughout the Shivas Yemei HaMishteh, that is, the full week of celebration which follows the actual wedding. This too, though, is true only if a Minyan is present. The Pischei Teshuvah (Even HaEzer Ibid. Sif Katan 8) discusses whether the ten men must all eat at the meal or whether it's enough that the ten men are present; he concludes that a majority of them must have eaten at the meal. There are, however, other opinions on this matter, and the more prevalent custom is that all ten should eat; at least seven should have bread, while the other three should have a bite of something (See Sefer HaNisuin KiHilchatam, Chelek 2, Perek 14 Sif 41).

The Gemara (Ibid.) immediately adds, though, that even with a Minyan, the Sheva Berachos are recited for a full week only if Panim Chadashos, a new face, is present at each meal throughout the week. The Rambam (Hilchos Berachos Perek 2 Halachos 9, 10) and the Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Sifim 5-8) rule accordingly. It is worth noting that there is a dispute as to who may qualify to serve as the required Panim Chadashos. The Rambam (Ibid. Halacha 10) understands that it must be someone who did not hear the Berachos recited at the wedding, while the Rosh in Kesubos (Perek 1 Siman 13) writes that it may be someone who did not partake of any of the festive meals yet, even though he may have heard the Berachos recited at the wedding. The Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Sif 7) brings both views, expressing preference for the latter; the Beis Shemuel (Ibid. Sif Katan 8) however, writes that the Maharshal accepted the first view, that of the Rambam (Ibid.). The Rosh (Ibid.) adds that the new person coming as the Panim Chadashos must be someone whose presence really enhances the joy, that is, someone on whose account there will be even more Simcha at the meal. This point is also quoted in Tosafos in Kesubos (Ibid. s.v. V'Hu She'Ba'oo) and is cited in the Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Sif 8) as well. However, the Shittah Mekubetzes in Kesubos (Ibid. s.v. V'Hu She'Ba'oo) quotes from Rashi that it is not necessary to have any special person, and that anybody who attends can serve as the Panim Chadashos. This seems to be the prevalent practice today, although it may be preferable to follow the first view and invite a more distinguished guest, if possible (See Sefer HaNisuin K'Hilchatam Ibid. Sif 69). The Ramo (Ibid. Sif 7) notes that the person serving as the Panim Chadashos need not eat anything at the meal; the Ritva in Kesubos (Ibid. s.v. Tanu Rabbenan) writes that he may come even after the meal is over, as long as he is there for the Sheva Berachos. The above cited Tosafos in Kesubos (Ibid.) and many other Rishonim write that on Shabbos, the Sheva Berachos may be recited even without any Panim Chadashos present; the Shulchan Aruch (Ibid. Sif 8) accepts this view and extends it to Yom Tov as well. The reason suggested in Tosafos (Ibid.) and elsewhere is that based on a Midrash, the Shabbos (or Yom Tov) itself is considered to be Panim Chadashos, and there is certainly additional joy at the meal on Shabbos (and Yom Tov). The Shittah Mekubetzes (Ibid. end of the dibbur), however, quotes from the Ramban that it is because there are always additional people present on Shabbos. The Chasam Sofer, in his Chidushim on Kesubos (Ibid. s.v. B'Makhalos) writes that a woman can serve as the Panim Chadashos if her presence enhances the gladness. The aforementioned Ritva (Ibid.) however, clearly says that she cannot, because the Panim Chadashos must be someone who can be counted toward the Minyan required for these Berachos. This question may relate to the function of the Panim Chadashos as well as to why Shabbos (or Yom Tov) counts as Panim Chadashos, but the latter view appears to be the accepted practice, as noted in the Pischei Teshuvah (Ibid. Sif Katan 14).

From: Listmaster@shemayisrael.com peninim@shemayisrael.com Subject: PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM - Parshas Chayei Sarah

PARSHAS CHAYEI SORA Sarah's lifetime was... (23:1) Life is a gift, a precious gift from Hashem. In the Talmud Gittin 64a, Chazal teach us the signs for determining a young child's maturity level. If one gives a child a stone and he proceeds to throw it away, but he keeps a nut which he has been given, it indicates that his mind is beginning to develop. If one gives him an object which he is prepared to return to its owner after a while, it is a clear sign that he is mature. In other words, the ability to distinguish between what is a gift and what is not; and the awareness that one must return the gift when it is demanded, are clear indications of a growing mind. Horav Avraham Pam, zl, explains that life is a gift, a gift which we return after a while. One who does not understand this idea behaves as if he will live forever, not caring that he has no purpose in life, acting like an immature child. On the other hand, even a young person is capable of understanding the transitory nature of life and appreciating the unique gift granted to him by the Almighty. Thus, this young person who values every minute of this precious gift, is, despite his age, a mature person. Furthermore, one who does not value and appreciate the gift of life repudiates his Benefactor.

The Chafetz Chaim, zl, was a person who valued the gift of life. I recently heard that his nephew, Horav Chaim Yitzchak Pupko, zl, who served him for twelve years, once got up his nerve and asked the Chafetz Chaim, "How old is the uncle?" The Chafetz Chaim seemingly ignored the question. A few moments later, the Chafetz Chaim took an envelope of coins and handed it to his nephew. "Here, take this," he said. A moment went by, and the Chafetz Chaim asked, "Are you not going to count what I gave you?" "No," he responded. "It is not proper to count a gift." "You are right," countered the Chafetz Chaim. "Life is a gift from Hashem. It is not proper to count it." What an incredible thought, but that is why he was the Chafetz Chaim.

Life is a gift and must, therefore, be cherished. Every minute is special, every minute an opportunity that should not be wasted. Alas, some people realize this only when they have almost lost it. The following story demonstrates how a person who realized that he had almost died spent the rest of his life with this memory firmly entrenched in his mind. The story is about two very famous brothers, both multi-millionaires, Nathan and Isidore Strauss, considered to be among the greatest philanthropists of their day. They, together with their wives, took a trip to Europe in 1912. After enjoying all the cultural sights and sounds of the continent, they decided to go to what was then called Palestine. When these two philanthropists arrived in Eretz Yisrael, they were given the royal treatment wherever they went. The holy places, shuls, yeshivos, all received their attention. While Nathan was captivated by the pure holiness of the land, his brother Isidore was getting bored. "How many camels and how many schools and hovels can you see? Once you've seen one, you've seen them all," he complained. "It is time to go." Nathan Strauss and his wife refused to leave. For some reason, he was overcome by the sight of so many people living in abject poverty, yet remaining committed and filled with inner joy. He just could not pull himself away.

The brothers argued. Finally Isidore said, "You are intractable. I am leaving. Stay here if you insist. I am going back to America." They parted. Nathan stayed in Eretz Yisrael, traveling throughout the length and breadth of the land. Wherever he went, he contributed. He gave money for the creation of a city on the shores of the Mediterranean. Being its major benefactor, the city was named for him. Hence, the city of Netanya, after Nathan, was established.

Isidore did not stay. He rushed and got to his ship just on time. You see, his connection was very important to him. He wanted badly to sail back to the United States on the most famous ship of the day. In fact, it was just taking its maiden voyage. Yes, Isidore and Ida Strauss made the connection in Southampton, England, on the ill-fated Titanic. Five days later, they were among the 1500 who went down with the ship that "would never go down." Nathan Strauss lived for the rest of his life with the acute awareness that, if not for the grace of the Almighty, he would have been on the Titanic too. He realized that he could have died and that he was saved for a reason: He had a mission to perform. For the rest of his life, he continued to give of his means and his time and energy to promote acts of chesed.

While an encounter with our own mortality is certainly a sobering motivator, we should not wait for the reminder. We are here for a reason. Life is short. Let us live it to its fullest - by making every minute count through serving Hashem.

Sarah's lifetime was... (23:1)

Sarah Imeinu is not the first person to have died. The Torah does, however, devote considerable "space" to her passing - the passing of the first Matriarch, the first Jewish mother. Thus, I feel it appropriate to address the subjects of death, Olam Habah, and Techias HaMeisim, resurrection of the dead.

Horav Shlomo Wolbe, Shlita, writes that one of the most difficult tasks facing people in contemporary times is developing a firm belief in the World to Come. We talk about it, yearn for it, work for it, but do we really believe in it?

Techias Ha'Meisim is a very remote concept for us. The concept of death in itself sends a sense of shock through us, because a living person adamantly refuses to believe that he will eventually leave this world and that he will no longer be with his body, which is how we conceptualize life. It takes a great deal of cogent thought and spiritual development to internalize the idea that one's soul will continue to exist in a totally spiritual sense, completely divested of its earthly "container." He must then accept the notion that his body will completely disintegrate, leaving not a trace of its previous physical encounter with this world.

I think it is simply a matter of confronting the inevitability of death and the fear of the unknown. Once we begin to accept the inevitable and understand what takes place when the soul leaves its earthly abode, we might easier begin to relate to "what follows." Horav Yechiel Michel Tikuchinsky, zl, in his magnum opus, the Geshet HaChaim, writes a brilliant essay that lends meaning to the essence of life and death. I take the liberty to present the ideas of this essay.

Life is really a bridge, a passageway leading from the womb to the grave. It begins at a point which we refer to as birth, and ends at death. The person that traverses the bridge known as life knows of no other form of life. He imagines this sojourn as being the entirety of life; he has no recollection of his past and has no idea of the nature of his long future. He, consequently, cannot grasp the notion of life before birth and life after death. Likewise, if a fetus could think like an adult, it would ostensibly conclude that the only world is the narrow one it knows. Similarly, to think that our world is the only world of life is equally absurd.

Rav Tikuchinsky expands on this idea with a penetrating analogy. Imagine unborn twins who have never seen the light of day. One believes the tradition that there is life after the womb. The other is "enlightened" much like our "progressive" brethren, who believe only what their limited intelligence can grasp. The believer shared with his brother the vision of a new world, a new life filled with people, creatures that would walk upright in a spacious planet filled with oceans, mountains and planets. Stars would fill the sky; clouds would deliver rain to nourish the soil, etc. The non-believer laughed and derided his brother's naiveté. "One would have to be an utter fool to believe this," he said.

"There is only one end to this world in which we live," the non-believer told his naïve twin. "When we leave this world, we will fall into a dark abyss from which we will never return. When we leave here - we are gone forever!"

Suddenly, in the midst of this conversation, the mother's birth pains began heralding the beginning of the end of their stay in their little world. The "ground" beneath the believing twin disintegrated -- and in a flash -- he was gone. His brother was broken-hearted over the terrible tragedy that had taken place. His brother, his friend, his only companion in his little world, was tragically stricken. He began to cry and bemoan his brother's fate. "Where have you gone?" he cried. "If only you would have listened to me. In your utter foolishness you believed that there would be a birth, and, therefore, you did not hold on to keep from falling into the abyss. You would not listen, and now you are gone!"

Between the sobs and tears, the remaining brother heard his brother's cries, the cries of a newborn infant. "Woe is me! That must be the final cries of my lost brother!" He did not realize that while he was bemoaning the fate of his "lost" brother, sounds of joy, "Mazel tov, mazel tov!" filled the delivery room.

What a powerful analogy. Truly, everyone understands the message that is being conveyed to us. Just as the nine months of gestation are nothing more than a transitional period, a prelude to a spacious and breathtaking world, so, too, the temporary life in this world is only a bridge to the eternal world of Olam Habah. We seem to have no problem understanding the enormous disparity between the narrow and cramped world of the womb and our wonderful world. Yet, we have great difficulty in accepting the vast difference between our world and the World to Come. Are we that much different than the "non-believing" twin who could not fathom a world beyond his cramped quarters in his mother's womb? Anyone who thinks that his

physical body is the only place life can exist -- and who believes that when that body returns to dust life ceases to exist -- is as unknowing and obtuse as the non-believing twin.

When we leave the womb, we are born into the temporary world of Olam Hazeh, this world. When we leave this world in the process called death, we are really going through a metaphysical experience which for the soul is called birth. Pregnancy is the prelude for physical life, while life is the preparation for Heavenly, spiritual life.

Hence, birth, life and death are interwoven. Birth leads to life on this world, which is actually a preparation for our ultimate destination: life in the World to Come. Death is no longer something to fear, unless one has not prepared himself for everlasting life.

Let it be that the maiden to whom I shall say, "Please tip over your jug so I may drink, and who replies, "Drink, and I will even water your camels," her will You have designated for Your servant, for Yitzchak. (24:14)

The Bais HaLevi submits that Eliezer tested Rivkah in two areas. First, he sought to ascertain if she was a *gomeles chesed*, would perform kindness, by giving drink to someone whom she did not know. Of special interest to Eliezer was the fact that she did not have a cup for him. He would have to drink directly from the pitcher. Who knows if he had germs that would contaminate her pitcher. Would she offer him to drink or not?

Second, of extreme significance, is what she would do after Eliezer drank from the pitcher. What would she do with her left-over water? Would she spill it out, thereby embarrassing the man to whom she had given water; or would she take the pitcher home and share the water with her family, who might become ill as a result of drinking "contaminated" water?

The optimum for which he could hope was what ultimately occurred. She demonstrated her kindness by extending the pitcher to Eliezer. She also showed common sense when she took the left-over water and poured it for the camels.

The Bais HaLevi alludes to a very important principle, one that we often seem to ignore. *Middos tovos*, good character traits, such as pursuing *chesed*, going out of one's way to help another, are all wonderful and essential for one's spiritual development, but they go hand in hand with *seichel*, common sense. One who has no *seichel* will accomplish very little with his *chesed*. Sooner or later, he will do something foolish or hurt the feelings of the person he is trying to help. He means well; he wants to help; he regrettably does not know how. Common sense is a prerequisite for success. *Seichel* is more than a good idea; without it, one is lost!

Hashem before Whom I have walked, will send His angel with you. (24:40) Avraham Avinu's expression discusses his relationship with Hashem in terms of one "before Whom I have walked." Rashi, in *Parshas Noach* (6:9), distinguishes between Avraham and Noach, about whom it is written, "Noach walked with Hashem." Noach walked with Hashem, requiring Hashem's support to uphold him in his righteousness, while Avraham drew strength from within himself and walked in his righteousness by himself. Horav Nosson Wachtfogel, zl, explains the depth of Avraham's "walking by himself" in the following manner.

He cites the *pasuk* in *Yeshayahu* 51:1, where the Navi speaks to the righteous Jews, "Listen to me, O pursuers of righteousness, O seekers of Hashem...Look to Avraham your forefather and to Sarah who bore you, for when he was yet alone did I summon him and bless him and made him many." The Navi seems to be implying that Avraham's distinction was in the fact that he was called "echad," one. Furthermore, we note the *Talmud Pesachim* 118a, which cites Hashem *Yisborach* saying that He spared Avraham from the *kivshan ha'eish*, fiery cauldron, because "I am a *Yachid*, one (individual) in My world, and he (Avraham) is also a *yachid*, in his world. It is only appropriate that a *yachid* save a *yachid*."

Avraham's distinction was in his being a *yachid*, an individual. Rav Nosson submits that this does not mean that it was Avraham's independence that distinguished him, because independence is not necessarily a virtue. One must be willing to listen, to be inclined to "bend" a little and defer to others who might be more knowledgeable or more experienced. Rather, the advantage of being a *yachid* lies in one's ability to take the initiative, to take a stand and not always be a follower. Avraham Avinu taught us a significant lesson: one must be prepared to learn, to take his own initiative - when necessary. This does not preclude the importance of following. It is just very important to know whom to follow.

Hebrew Academy of Cleveland Rabbi L. Scheinbaum Sponsored by Chaim Kaufman in loving memory of my mother Peninim on the Torah is in its 11th year of publication. The first seven years have been published in

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From: Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org] Subject Parshat Chayei Sara
PARSHAT CHAYEI SARA ME'ARAT HAMACHPELA
ROSH HAYESHIVA RAV MORDECHAI GREENBERG SHLITA
Chazal interpret "Me'arat Hamachpela" (the double-cave) in numerous ways: it is double in couples; it has a lower and upper chamber; G-d doubled Adam's height and buried him there; the entrance to Gan Eden is there. What do these various interpretations have in common? They further taught in Midrash Rabbah:
"She envisioned a field and bought it" (Mishlei 31:16) – [Sarah] envisioned and took the field of Machpela and was buried there, as it says, "Afterwards Avraham buried Sarah, his wife [in the cave of the field of Machpela]." (Bereishit 23:19)
Chazal state that Sarah died on account of the snake, i.e., that her death was not due to sin. Her burial is merely a matter of safekeeping until the resurrection, while she remains in her death as in her life, a perfect harmony of body and soul, with no need for separation. [The Ramchal and Nefesh Hachaim (1:6) explain that the primary purpose of burial is to separate between the body and soul, and through this man achieves his completion.] Therefore, her place of burial is in Me'arat Hamachpela, a cave that expresses the connection of the two worlds, since it stands at the doorway between this world and the next world. One who connects body and soul is fitting for the connection between this world and the next, and therefore his place is in this cave. Because of this, the patriarchs are called, "the sleepers of Hebron," because the souls of those who are buried there are not separated from their bodies. They are like sleepers who await awakening in the future, and they are in Hebron, where the soul connects (mitchaber) with the body.
Sarah prepared this connection in her life. "When one-hundred years old she was as twenty, and when twenty as seven." (Rashi) This is the meaning of "envisioning" the field in her lifetime; she prepared herself to be worthy of being buried there. Similarly, Avraham's entire essence was unification:
"We have a small sister (achot)." – This is Avraham, as it says, "Avraham was one," for he unified (icha) all the people of the world. Bar Kapara says, he mended (icha) the tear.
Chazal describe what happened from the times of Adam until Avraham. When Adam sinned, the Divine Presence rose away to the sixth heaven, and it continued to ascend until the seventh heaven. When Avraham came along, he lowered it one heaven, and so, too, Yitzchak and Yaakov, until Moshe came along and returned it to the world: "G-d descended upon Mt. Sinai." (Shemot 19:20) In this way, Avraham mends the tear that Adam tore between heaven and earth, and unifies all the people of the world through deeds of kindness and hospitality. Just as he mended the tear between the upper realms and the lower ones, so, too, he merited to uncover the place which unifies heaven and earth.
Adam was two-hundred cubits tall. The Maharal explains that the number one-hundred indicates perfection, and a height of two-hundred cubits indicates perfection of body and soul. However, when he sinned, his height was reduced, as it says, "You placed Your Hand (kapecha) upon me." Kaf has the numerical value of one-hundred. G-d placed His Hand upon Adam and his height was reduced to one-hundred.
It says in the Zohar that when Avraham entered the cave to bury Sarah, Adam and Eve wanted to leave out of shame, but Avraham promised them that he would pray on their behalf, and they were calmed. This is what it says, "Afterwards Avraham buried et Sarah – this includes Eve," that Eve's burial was after Sarah's. Only now did they find their peace. We now also understand why G-d doubled Adam's height. When Adam sinned, his height was reduced to one-hundred, but after Avraham mended the tear, and rectified that which Adam ruined, his height returned, and once again his height was doubled to two-hundred at Me'arat Hamachpela
This is what we say in our prayers, "Bring us fully-upright (komemiut) to our Land." Komemiut implies, "Like the two heights of Adam" (Sifrei Parshat Bechokotai) – the perfection of body and soul.
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RABBI HOWARD JACHTER

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EIN BISHUL ACHAR BISHUL

by Rabbi Howard Jachter

Introduction This week we will outline the parameters of the celebrated rule of Ein Bishul Achar Bishul (literally, there is no cooking after cooking).
Liquids The Rishonim debate if the Ein Bishul Achar Bishul rule applies only to solids or even to liquids. The Biur Halacha (318:4 s.v. Yeish) notes that the Rambam, Rashba, and Ran adopt the lenient position that Ein Bishul Achar Bishul applies even to liquids. On the other hand, Rashi, Rabbeinu Yonah, the Rosh, and the Tur adopt the stringent opinion that Ein Bishul Achar Bishul applies only to solids. The Acharonim (see Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 254:1 and Eglei Tal Ofeh 8:11) explain that the stringent view believes that the effect of the cooking of a liquid is nullified after it has cooled down. By contrast, solids retain the effect of cooking even after the food has cooled down. An explanation of the lenient opinion is that Ein Bishul Achar Bishul is a comprehensive rule that applies even when the reason for the rule is not relevant.
Rav Yosef Karo (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 318:4 and 15) rules in accordance with the strict opinion. The Rama (O.C. 318:15), however, cites the lenient view. The Rama records the commonly accepted Ashkenazic practice to adopt a compromise view. The practice is to follow the lenient opinion if the liquid "has not completely cooled down." Acharonim debate what the Rama refers to when he states "not completely cooled down." The Eglei Tal (Ofeh 8) explains that it refers to liquid that is less than Yad Soledet Bo but is still sufficiently hot that people regard it as a hot drink. The Chazon Ish (O.C. 37:13) indicates that the Rama is lenient if the liquid is not entirely cooled down.
Acharonim also debate the reasoning of this compromise. At first glance, the compromise appears difficult since reheating a liquid that is below the temperature of Yad Soledet Bo constitutes an act of Bishul according to the strict opinion. On the other hand, the lenient opinion permits reheating a liquid even if it has completely cooled down. The Halacha appears to attach no significance to the fact that the liquid has completely cooled down.
The Chazon Ish (ibid.) explains that the Rama fundamentally accepts the lenient view as normative. However, there is concern that if an item has completely cooled down it will be difficult to distinguish between the cooled down liquid and liquid that has never been heated. The common practice seeks to avoid this potential confusion. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (cited by Rav Mordechai Willig, Bait Yitzchak 21:181), on the other hand, suggests that the Rama fundamentally accepts the stringent opinion as normative. The Rav notes, though, that the reasoning of the strict view is that when a liquid cools down, no impact remains from the cooking. Accordingly, as long as the liquid has not completely cooled down, some of the effect on the original cooking remains.
Defining Liquids and Solids Acharonim have debated the definition of liquid and solid in this context for centuries. Some Acharonim (the Bach, Vilna Gaon, and Mishna Berura) believe that a food must be free of any liquid to qualify as a solid. Other Acharonim (including the Taz, Pri Megadim, and the Kaf Hachaim) believe that if the majority of an item is solid, it is classified as a solid (see the opinions summarized by Rav Shimon Eider, Halachos of Shabbos p. 259 footnote 114).
Rav Yosef Adler cites Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, who offers the following practical guidelines. If the food is eaten with a fork, it is a solid and if it is eaten with a spoon, it is a liquid. Similarly, Rav Ovadia Yosef (Teshuvot Yechaveh Daat 2:45) rules in accordance with the lenient view. On the other hand, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe 4:74:Bishul:7) rules in accordance with the strict view, except perhaps in case of great need. Rav Eider (ibid.) presents a very cogent defense of the lenient view based on an idea of Rav Zvi Pesach Frank.
Practical Application - Tea Refills An interesting question arises regarding refilling a cup of tea or coffee. Some Poskim (Rav Aharon Kotler and others cited in Halachos of Shabbos p. 295 note 423) require one to wipe the remaining few drops of water on the bottom of the cup that have totally cooled down. Many authorities, though, are lenient about this point. The Chazon Ish (ibid. note 424) rules leniently, arguing that fundamentally we rule that Ein Bishul Achar Bishul applies to liquids. The custom to follow the strict view if the liquid has entirely cooled down, argues the Chazon Ish, does not apply if one merely reheats a minute amount of water and does not care about reheating the few drops. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrot Moshe O.C. 4:74:Bishul:19) argues that one may be lenient because of multiple doubts (Sfeik Sfeika). One lenient consideration is that many Rishonim permit reheating liquids. The second lenient consideration is that since one is reheating such a minute amount of water one is not concerned with the reheating that occurs. This situation is referred to as a Psik Reisha Dilo Nicha Lei (an unintended side effect) and is permitted by some Rishonim (most notably the Aruch). The combination of these two lenient opinions allows for a lenient ruling. This ruling also applies to returning a ladle to a Kli Rishon if the ladle has a few drops of liquid that had been cooked but subsequently cooled down completely.

Cooked Sugar, Cooked Salt, and Instant Coffee The Mishna Berura (318:71) notes that salt that was cooked during its processing may even be placed on food in a Kli Rishon if the Kli Rishon was removed from the fire. The Mishna Berura points out that the same applies to sugar that was cooked during its processing. He notes, however, that Rav Akiva Eiger (at the conclusion of O.C. 253, see Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata 1:note 138) questions the application of this rule. This is because Rav Akiva Eiger believes that a solid item that will melt and turn into a liquid may have the status of a liquid. According to this approach, the Ein Bishul Achar Bishul rule does not apply even to cooked salt and sugar. The Mishna Berura concludes that it is best to act somewhat stringently in this regard - to avoid placing salt and sugar in a Kli Rishon. He permits relying on the lenient opinions regarding a Kli Sheni.

Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata (1:49) notes the many applications of this rule. They include instant coffee, instant tea, soup bullion, powdered milk, and powdered cocoa. The Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata follows the approach of the Mishna Berura and recommends avoiding placing any of these items in a Kli Rishon. See, however, Rav Ovadia Yosef (Teshuvot Yechaveh Daat 2:44) who rules in accordance with those authorities who rule leniently in this regard. These authorities include Rav Zvi Pesach Frank and Rav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg. Cooking after Baking etc. The Bait Yosef (318 s.v. V'katav Harav Eliezer Mi'Metz) cites a celebrated dispute concerning the scope of the principle of Ein Bishul Achar Bishul. He cites the Sefer Yereim who limits the rule to similar processes such as cooking after cooking, baking after baking, and roasting after roasting. However, he forbids dissimilar processes such as cooking after baking or roasting after cooking. The Bait Yosef, though, quotes the Raavya who rules leniently and adopts an expansive view of the Ein Bishul Achar Bishul rule. He rules that it applies even to dissimilar processes such as cooking after baking. A ramification of this dispute is whether one may place bread in very hot (Yad Soledet Bo) soup.

In the Bait Yosef, Rav Yosef Karo cites the many texts cited by both the Yereim and the Raavya as proof for their respective opinions. In the Shulchan Aruch (318:5), Rav Karo cites both the opinion of the Yereim and the opinion of the Raavya without indicating a preference for either opinion. Accordingly, this dispute remains unresolved and leniency is appropriate only in combination with other lenient considerations.

The Mishna Berura (318:47) seems to be lenient regarding the Kli Shelishi question only when the lenient ruling of the Raavya is relevant. For example, he permits placing Challah in very hot soup, if the soup is in a Kli Shelishi. This also appears to be the Mishna Berura's approach (compare 318:45 with 318:87 and 253:84) to the question whether a ladle that removed hot food from a Kli Rishon is regarded as a Kli Rishon or a Kli Sheni. The Maharil (cited by the Taz, Yoreh Deah 92:30) views a ladle as a Kli Sheni. The Taz (ibid.) sharply challenges the Maharil's view, arguing that since the ladle was immersed in a Kli Rishon, it assumes the status of a Kli Rishon.

Conclusion There are a myriad of unresolved disputes regarding the principle of Ein Bishul Achar Bishul. The basic approach of Halachic authorities is to be lenient when a combination of lenient factors exists. Next week, G-d willing and Bli Neder, we will conclude our discussion of the biblical laws of Bishul and begin to discuss the rabbinical laws of Bishul.

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HAGASA AND SHEHIYA

by Rabbi Howard Jachter

Introduction In this issue, we will examine two important topics regarding Bishul on Shabbat. These are Hagasa (stirring food) and Shehiya (placing food on the fire before Shabbat begins). Hagasa is the last topic involving a biblical prohibition that we shall review in this series. Shehiya will be the first rabbinical prohibition that we shall address.

Hagasa - The Astonishing View of the Kol Bo It is biblically prohibited to stir food that has not been fully cooked (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 318:18 and Mishna Berura 318:114). This is because stirring contributes to the cooking process, as it makes the food cook faster. The Bait Yosef (Orach Chaim 253 s.v. Uma Shekatav Rabbeinu Uvetanur Asur) cites the surprising opinion of the Kol Bo, who forbids stirring food while it is still directly on the fire even if the food is fully cooked. The Shaar Hatziyon (318:148) notes that he finds the opinion of the Kol Bo to be astonishing and does not understand the basis of this opinion.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (cited in Mesora 7:15-16) offers the following explanation of the Kol Bo. The Rav points to the Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 9:11), who compares stirring food (Hagasa) to wringing out water from clothes after they have been washed. The Rambam explains that one violates the prohibition of washing clothes on Shabbat by wringing out the water because, "Wringing the water out is part of the process of washing, just as stirring is part of the process of cooking." The Rav explains that although wringing out the water does not clean the clothes, it constitutes a biblically forbidden act because it is part of the cleaning process. Similarly, although stirring food after it is fully

cooked does not contribute to the cooking of the food, it constitutes a biblical prohibition because it is part of the cooking process.

Based on The Rav's insight, we can explain why the Kol Bo prohibits Hagasa of fully cooked food only when the food remains on the fire. It is because one usually stirs completely cooked food only while the food is still on the fire. Hagasa - Practical Implications Rav Yosef Karo (Shulchan Aruch 318:18) rules that if the food is not completely cooked then even removing food from the pot using a spoon constitutes a forbidden act of Hagasa. Nonetheless, Rav Karo does not rule in accordance with the opinion of the Kol Bo. Rav Karo rules that one may stir food that has been completely cooked. The Rama (318:18 as understood by the Mishna Berura 318:117), however, rules that Lechatchila (ab initio) one should not remove food from a pot while it is yet on the fire even with a spoon.

Accordingly, Ashkenazic practice seeks to accommodate the stringent opinion of the Kol Bo. What if it is impractical to remove the pot from the fire in order to remove its contents? A common example is a one-piece crockpot where there is no alternative but to remove the food while it is yet on the fire (unless one attaches the crockpot to a timer, which will shut off the crockpot when it is time to serve its contents). Rav Moshe Feinstein (Teshuvot Igrat Moshe 4:74:Bishul:9) rules that one may not be lenient in such a situation. The Chazon Ish (O.C. 37:15), though, rules that one may be lenient if one finds it very difficult to accommodate the strict view of the Kol Bo. The Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata (1:32), Rav Yehuda Amital (through personal communication), and Rav Mordechai Willig (through personal communication) all agree that one may follow this ruling of the Chazon Ish. Those Yeshivot where the practice is to enjoy late Friday night Chulent commonly rely on this lenient ruling of the Chazon Ish. Shehiya Chazal issued a decree forbidding one to place food on the fire before Shabbat begins (Shehiya). Their concern was that one might be tempted to stir the coals to make the food cook faster (Shabbat 18b). The Gemara (Shabbat 36b) records a great controversy between the Chachamim and Chanania regarding the scope of this prohibition. The Chachamim forbid Shehiya unless the food is cooked entirely and any further cooking will detract from the quality of the food (Mitzamek Vera Lo). Chanania limits the decree to where the food is not cooked to the extent that it is marginally edible (Maachal Ben Drosai). The Rishonim vigorously debate whether the Halacha follows the opinion of the Chachamim or Chanania. The Rif, Rambam, and Ramban rule in accordance with the strict view of the Chachamim. Rashi, Tosafot, and the Baal Hamaor rule in accordance with Chanania. Rav Yosef Karo (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 253:1) rules in accordance with the Chachamim. This is hardly surprising as the major Sefardic Rishonim follow the opinion of the Chachamim. The Rama (ibid.), on the other hand, notes that the accepted Ashkenazic practice is to follow the opinion of Chanania. The Rama, in turn, notes the common Ashkenazic practice to follow the great Ashkenazic Rishonim, who ruled like Chanania. Interestingly, the Biur Halacha (253:1 s.v. Venahagu) writes that it is certainly preferable to follow the opinion of the Chachamim. He bases this approach on the fact that the Bait Yosef cites the Rosh (Shabbat 3:1), who seems to tolerate the Ashkenazic practice to follow Chanania very reluctantly. The Rosh writes that "since there are many opinions on this matter and the Jewish People are highly committed to observe the Mitzva to enjoy Shabbat and they will not listen to follow the stringent view, let them follow their custom to follow the opinion of Chanania."

The Chazon Ish (O.C. 37:3) understands the Rosh very differently. The Chazon Ish understands the Rosh as initially positing that since this is a complex dispute, in principle one should be strict and avoid attempting to resolve the dispute. However, since one will often impinge on Oneg Shabbat if he avoids resolving the dispute, one's reaction will be that he wishes to follow the basic Halacha and not be strict. Indeed, the people have the right to do so because this is only a matter of a rabbinical law and they are the descendants of those who followed the lenient view based on the rulings of their rabbis. Thus, the Chazon Ish concludes that one may follow the Rama without any reservations. Indeed, this seems to be the intent of the Rama, as he does not say that it is best to be strict about this point (contrast this with the Rama's assessment of the Minhag he cites in O.C. 253:2). Common practice appears to accept the Chazon Ish's approach to this matter.

Does a Blech Help? Shulchan Aruch vs. Rav Akiva Eiger The Shulchan Aruch (ibid.) clearly indicates that the aforementioned dispute pertains only if the food is placed on a fire not covered by a Blech. Shehiya is prohibited due to concern that one may come to stir the coals. However, a Blech remedies this concern. Thus, Shehiya should be permitted if a Blech covers the fire. Nevertheless, Rav Akiva Eiger (ibid. s.v. Oh Nitbashel) posits that Chanania does not permit Shehiya if the food is not cooked to the point of Maachal Ben Drosai even if there is a Blech. The Mishna Berura (254:50) accepts the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch. He merely notes the view of Rav Akiva Eiger (Biur Halacha 253:1 s.v. Ve'im). For a critique of Rav Akiva Eiger's opinion, see Rav Mordechai Willig, Bait Yitzchak 20:66-68. Common practice seems to follow the Shulchan Aruch and the Mishna Berura on this point. People commonly put a kettle filled with cold water on the Blech moments before Shabbat begins, in accordance with the lenient view. However, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (cited by Rav Hershel

Schachter in Bait Yitzchak 28:18) reports that the practice among the Jews in pre-war Galicia was to follow the stringent viewpoint of Rav Akiva Eiger on this issue. The cousin of this author, Rav Yosef Singer of the Lower East Side (who served as a Rav in pre-war Galicia) confirms the authenticity of Rav Soloveitchik's report. My fellow "Galitzianers" should consult with their rabbis as to whether our Galician heritage still binds us to this practice of our ancestors. Kedaira Chaita The Gemara (Shabbat 18b) and Shulchan Aruch (253:1) permit Shehiya if there is some raw meat placed in the pot immediately before Shabbat. The reasoning for this leniency is that the concern for stirring the coals is not relevant if there is some raw meat added to the food. This is because the food will not be ready for the Friday night meal no matter how much the food is stirred since it takes a very long time for the food to cook. Moreover, the food will be ready for the Shabbat afternoon meal even if the food will not be stirred. The Mishna Berura mentions no objection to following this rule. Similarly, the Aruch Hashulchan (253:8-9) notes this practice and does not express any reservations about relying on this rule.

Nevertheless, Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin (Kitvei Harav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin 2:19) ruled emphatically that this should not be relied upon in the modern era. Among his concerns were that modern ovens are much more efficient compared to those used in pre-modern times. Rav Henkin notes that raw meat cooks relatively quickly in modern ovens. Hence, he argues that the concern that one may come to stir the coals (or adjust the flame) is relevant today even if raw meat has been added to a dish. Recall that Rav Henkin arrived in America in the early twentieth century and lived a generation after the Mishna Berura and Aruch Hashulchan were written.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (cited by Rav Hershel Schachter, Nefesh Harav pp. 156-157) agrees with this ruling of Rav Henkin. Rav Moshe Feinstein (cited by Rav Shimon Eider, Halachos of Shabbos p. 336, note 783), however, believes that we still may rely on the Kedaira Chaita rule even when using a modern oven. We should note that some have suggested that the Kedaira Chaita rule may have reemerged with the advent of the crockpot. Since crockpots cook so slowly, the concern that one may come to adjust them might not be relevant. One should consult with his Rav about this issue.

Conclusion There are many issues concerning the question of Hagasa of items that are fully cooked and the rabbinical decree of Shehiya. One should develop with a protocol for managing these issues on Shabbat with his Rav.

From: RABBI MORDECHAI KORNFELD Kollel Iyun Hadaf [kornfeld@netvision.net.il] daf-sights Subject: Insights to the Daf: Sanhedrin 42-43
INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF THE MORDECAI (MARCUS) BEN ELIMELECH SHMUEL KORNFELD MASECHES SANHEDRIN brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, http://www.dafyomi.co.il SANHEDRIN 44 (19 Cheshvan) - Dedicated l'Illuy Nishmas Chaim Mordechai ben Harav Yisrael Azriel (Feldman) of Milwaukee, by the members of his family. PLEASE HELP US TO HELP YOU - WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT! *** Online donations: http://www.dafyomi.co.il/sponsors.htm *** ISRAEL address: Kollel Iyun Hadaf, P.O.B. 43087, Jerusalem 91430 ***
Sanhedrin 42

THE LATEST TIME TO RECITE "BIRKAS HA'LEVANAH" QUESTIONS: The Gemara (41b) teaches that Birkas ha'Levanah (or "Kidush ha'Levanah") may be recited until the moon no longer appears diminished. Rav Yehudah says that this refers to the seventh day of the month, while Neherda'i say that this refers to the sixteenth day of the month. The Poskim rule like Neherda'i (SHULCHAN ARUCH OC 426:3). The Poskim explain, based on the TESHUVOS MAHARIL (#19), that when the Gemara says "until the sixteenth," the sixteenth day is "not" included, and Birkas ha'Levanah may be said only until the fifteenth day of the month. In reality, though, even the fifteenth day is too late to recite Birkas ha'Levanah; rather, the latest time for reciting Birkas ha'Levanah is when half of the length of the month has passed since the time of the Molad (this is 14 days, 18 hours, and 396 1/2 Chalakim, as the length of the month is 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 Chalakim (out of 1080 Chalakim in one hour)). After that time, the moon's appearance begins to diminish again and it is too late to recite Birkas ha'Levanah.

For this reason, the Maharil concludes that in a month when there is a lunar eclipse (and thus the exact moment that the moon's appearance begins to diminish is evident, since the lunar eclipse is caused by the moon's opposition to the sun) one may not say Birkas ha'Levanah after the eclipse, since clearly half of the month has passed. The time of the Molad is printed in most Halachic calendars and announced at the time that we recite Birkas ha'Chodesh in the synagogue on the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh. The last moment to recite Birkas ha'Levanah is determined by simply adding half of a month to the moment of the Molad.

However, this calculation is problematic for a number of reasons. First, the midpoint of the month is the point at which the sun and the moon are in astronomical opposition (that is, the earth is directly between the sun and the moon). This occurs at one point in time, regardless of where on the globe a person lives. The moment of the Molad is the point at which the sun and moon are in perfect conjunction (that is, the moon is exactly between the earth and the sun). This also occurs at a single moment in time and does not depend on a person's location on the globe. It is an astronomical phenomenon and is not subjective. The time of the Molad that we announce in synagogue is the moment at which the Molad occurs according to the time in

Yerushalayim. However, depending upon a person's location around the world, the time of the Molad -- and the time of opposition half a month later -- will occur either be earlier (for the countries west of Yerushalayim) or later (for the countries east of Yerushalayim) because of the time difference! Why, then, do all Jewish communities use the same time of day for the latest time to recite Birkas ha'Levanah? The latest time should depend on the person's longitude!

Second, the time clock that is used in determining the Molad is not a clock that is used "anywhere" on the globe today. It is measuring the solar time (the time according to the movements of the sun) in the exact longitude of Yerushalayim. Today, the time used in Yerushalayim is known as Cairo time (the solar time as measured by the longitude of Cairo), which is 21 minutes later than the actual solar time in Yerushalayim (for example, when the actual solar time in Yerushalayim is 1:00, the time that appears on the clocks is 1:21 (Cairo time)). Based on this, if we want to know the true time of the Molad, the time of opposition according to our clocks, then in Yerushalayim we should subtract 21 minutes from the time that is announced in the synagogue, and in other places around the globe we should subtract a number of hours and minutes depending on the exact solar time of that particular longitude. Third, the length of the month on which we base our calculations -- 29 days, 12 hours, and 793 Chalakim -- is not the actual length of every lunar cycle. Rather, it is the average length of a month. The month itself might be either longer or shorter (by up to 14 hours, depending on the path of the ellipse, the varying orbit of the moon around the earth), as the Gemara says in Rosh Hashanah (25a). The reason for this is because while the moon is circling the earth, the earth is also moving further along its path, so that the moon will not reach conjunction until it travels a little more than a full orbit around the earth in order to catch up with the forward movement of the earth. Since the moon's orbit is elliptical and it travels slower at the point of aphelion (the point of the orbit of the moon around the earth at which the moon is farthest from the earth), it will travel that extra part of the ellipse and catch up with the earth either faster or slower, depending on whether it is closer to aphelion or close to perihelion as it reaches the point of conjunction. Accordingly, adding half of a month (14 days, 18 hours, 396 1/2 Chalakim) to the time of the Molad will not accurately determine the time at which the moon actually begins to diminish!

The same questions may be asked about the time of the Molad that is announced in the synagogue. Why do we not announce the actual time of conjunction as the time of the Molad? The TIFERES YISRAEL (in Shevili d'Raki'a, beginning of Seder Mo'ed) addresses this question. He answers that since, in the times of the Beis ha'Mikdash, the Sanhedrin proclaimed the new month in Yerushalayim, today we, too, mention the time of the Molad according to the time in Yerushalayim. This answer is appropriate with regard to the announcement that we make for the Molad in the synagogue, which is not for the sake of any Halachic purpose, but rather is "Zecher la'Mikdash." However, the calculation of the time of opposition with regard to the latest time at which one may say Birkas ha'Levanah -- which depends on the actual time of opposition, as the Maharil writes -- should be based on the actual astronomical time of opposition!

ANSWERS: (a) The ALAH YONAH (Rav Yonah Mertzbach) explains that we find that the Chachamim simplified mathematical calculations which are required for Halachos which affect the community at large. For this reason, we find that a different calculation for the length of a year is used when determining when to begin saying "v'Sen Tal u'Matar" in the Shemoneh Esreh, or when to recite "Birkas ha'Chamah," that which is used for calculating which year should be a leap year. For the former Halachos, the Chachamim used the simple equation of Shmuel (Eruvin 56a; see Insights there), according to which the year is exactly 365 days long, and for the latter Halachah the Chachamim used the calculation of Rav Ada. The same might apply with regard to calculating the length of the month: when determining the latest time to say Birkas ha'Levanah, the Chachamim simplified the calculation and said simply to add a set amount of time to the time of the Molad which is announced at the beginning of the month. Nevertheless, the Maharil writes that after an eclipse, one may not recite Birkas ha'Levanah, because the eclipse at is an obvious sign that clearly shows that half of the month has passed, and it is easy to act in accordance with that sign.

(b) The TESHUVOS BENEI TZION (1:42:10; Rav David Spira, Yerushalayim 1938) explains that the Chachamim did not require that we calculate the true Molad (as opposed to the average Molad) when determining the latest time to say Birkas ha'Levanah, because they relied on the principle of "Rov," following the majority. That is, since the time that we announce for the Molad can be either before, on, or after the occurrence of the true Molad, there is a greater chance that it will be "after" or "on" the Molad than "before" the Molad. We rely on this Rov to allow Birkas ha'Levanah to be recited until half a month has passed from the average time of Molad that is announced in the synagogue on the Shabbos before Rosh Chodesh. (Even though we usually do not rely on the principle of Rov to determine something which can be precisely verified, nevertheless we rely on Rov in this matter because the verification of the time of the Molad is so complicated, even for experts. The exact Molad is therefore considered somewhat "inaccessible" without relying on Rov.) Why, though, is it permitted for Jews in all longitudes to rely on the announced time of the Molad for calculating the latest time to say Birkas ha'Levanah, without taking into account the different time zones?

The Benei Tzion points out that this question is relevant primarily to people west of Yerushalayim. If they wait until the last hour to say Birkas ha'Levanah, then people to the west of Yerushalayim will say Birkas ha'Levanah "after" the true time limit has passed (since they are looking at their clocks and not at the Yerushalayim clocks). Those to the east of Yerushalayim will "stop" saying Birkas ha'Levanah "earlier" than they really have to, which is justifiable. According to a well-known Halachic ruling

(based on the BA'AL HA'ME'OR to Rosh Hashanah 20b; see Insights there, and see KUZARI 2:20), the "western limit" of the globe is 18 hours west of Yerushalayim. Our question may therefore be rephrased as follows: Why do we allow those living to the west of Yerushalayim to say Birkas ha'Levanah 18 hours after the time has passed? This question, the Benei Tzion asserts, may be answered based on a remarkable ruling of the TESHUVOS CHASAM SOFER (Orach Chaim 102). The Chasam Sofer permits Birkas ha'Levanah to be said on the sixteenth day of the month (in contrast to the MAHARIL and BEIS YOSEF OC 426) in a time of need. He explains that when the Gemara says that Birkas ha'Levanah may be recited until the sixteenth, it means "up to and including" the sixteenth. Even though the moon is already full after 14 days and 18 hours (see above), it remains full for another day and a half. The Chasam Sofer explains that even though the moon begins to diminish when half of the month has passed, nevertheless it is not obvious to the eye that the moon has begun to diminish until after the sixteenth. (When the YAD RAMAH to Sanhedrin was printed it was discovered that he says on this point exactly what the Chasam Sofer says.)

The Chasam Sofer suggests a proof for this from the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (20b) which says that the new moon is not visible until 18 hours after the Molad. Just as its growth is not visible for 18 hours, its diminution is not apparent until 18 hours half passed after the midpoint of the month.

The Benei Tzion explains that according to the Chasam Sofer there is an 18 hour leeway for reciting Birkas ha'Levanah after the full moon appears (i.e. after the point of opposition). Because of this, the Chachamim allowed the people who live until the western limit of the world -- which is 18 hours to the west of Yerushalayim -- to continue saying Birkas ha'Levanah until the latest time as it appears on "their" clocks even though they will be saying Birkas ha'Levanah up to 18 hours after the actual time of opposition.

(Many authorities have pointed out that the Chasam Sofer's argument is weak. The reason it takes 18 hours to see the new moon after the Molad is because it is too close to the sun and the light of the sun hides it. The full moon, the moon in opposition, on the other hand, is on the opposite side of the sky from the sun and thus the light of the sun does not impede its appearance. Nevertheless, the assertion that the appearance of the diminution of the full moon is delayed for some time is supported by the Yad Ramah.)

The Benei Tzion does not explain why we do not take into account the 21-minute difference between the clock used in Yerushalayim and the actual solar time in Yerushalayim (or, in other words, the difference between the time zone of Cairo and the actual solar time in Yerushalayim). That is, the true Yerushalayim time is 21 minutes "later" than what the clocks actually read in Yerushalayim (i.e. Cairo time). Hence, the latest time for Birkas ha'Levanah will arrive 21 minutes "before" our clocks read that time, and thus if we wait until our clocks reach the latest time, we have actually "passed" that time already! (For example, if the latest time, based on the calculation of the Molad and as expressed in the Halachic calendars, is 1:21 AM, then when our clocks in Yerushalayim reach 1:00 AM, we may no longer say Birkas ha'Levanah, since the real Yerushalayim time of 1:21 has already arrived.)

HALACHAH: According to what we have written above, there are several practical implications with regard to the latest time to recite Birkas ha'Levanah.

(a) The MISHNAH BERURAH (OC 426) writes that I'Chatchilah one should not say Birkas ha'Levanah after half a month has passed from the time of the Molad.

B'D'eved, if half of the month (14 days, 18 hours, 396 1/2 Chaakim) has passed but fifteen full days have not passed, then one may still say Birkas ha'Levanah (as the Shulchan Aruch rules). However, on the sixteenth day one should say it without "Shem u'Malchus," the Name of Hashem in the blessing (because the view of the Yad Ramah is a minority opinion).

(b) After an eclipse, one should not say Birkas ha'Levanah, since it is obvious that the moon's appearance has begun to diminish. Some say that even though the point of opposition is the midpoint of the eclipse, one should not say Birkas ha'Levanah from the time that the umbra, the shadow of the earth, covers the entire moon. Even though the moon is still visible (but darker), one should no longer recite Birkas ha'Levanah even before the midpoint of the eclipse arrives, since the moon has begun to diminish in brightness (because of the eclipse). (BIRUR HALACHAH of Rav Yechiel Avraham Zilber.)

Another point to take into consideration is that contrary to what we assumed earlier, the point of opposition might "not" be the same for all places on the globe. The reason for this is because there are two ways to determine the point of opposition. First, opposition can be the point at which the sun and moon are on opposite sides of the earth to an objective observer looking down from above the orbit of the earth. Second, opposition can be a subjective point at which the moon is at the opposite side of the earth from the vantage point of the observer on the dark (night) side of the earth. According to this second approach (which the TIFERES YISRAEL in Shevili d'Raki'a seems to adopt with regard to measuring the time of the true Molad), people further to the west might see the moon at opposition from their vantage point, for example, at the "beginning" of the night, while people further east will not see the moon catch up to the point of opposition from their vantage point until two or three hours later. If this is the way to measure opposition, then people further east might be able to say Birkas ha'Levanah even after the eclipse, since the moon has not yet reached opposition from their vantage point (even though the objective point of opposition-- i.e. the midpoint of the eclipse -- has passed).

According to the way the Benei Tzion explains, if exact tables of opposition are available, then it would be best to recite the Birkas ha'Levanah "before" [18 hours have passed after (according to the Chasam Sofer)] the point of actual opposition. In Europe and Asia this is not relevant, since the actual opposition can only be up to 14

hours earlier than the average opposition (which is included in the 18 hour leeway period). However, this would be relevant in North and South America.

Rav Alexander Shutz (Kiryat Sefer, author of KUNTRUS DI'SHEMAYA) points out that even when there is no eclipse, it should easily be discernible when the moon has passed opposition: by seeing whether the sun has set before the time that the moon rises. (That is, if the moon is not in the sky at the time that the sun sets, then it is after opposition.) We have learned that if it is obvious that opposition has passed, then one should not say Birkas ha'Levanah, as the Maharil explains, and therefore perhaps even in Yerushalayim we should not give an extra 18 hours for Birkas ha'Levanah, since there is an obvious sign that the moon has passed opposition. To this end, Rav Shutz prepared tables of the times of true opposition (see Chart).

All of these arguments and calculations pertain only to the latest time to say Birkas ha'Levanah. However, there is no need to change the announced time of the Molad when the time is announced in the synagogue for Birkas ha'Chodesh. This is because, as we have explained, it has become the accepted practice to announce the time of the Molad from the vantage point of Yerushalayim as "Zecher la'Mikdash," regardless of where a person is, even though that time will not be consistent with any clocks in the world (since it is true Yerushalayim time). For this reason, the Poskim point out that there is no point in adding an hour to the time of the Molad printed in the Halachic calendar when "Daylight Savings Time" is in use either locally or in Yerushalayim, since the time of the Molad is on an imaginary clock and is not based on an actual clock, such as Cairo time or Greenwich mean time.

THE BLESSING FOR THE NEW MOON AGADAH: The Gemara teaches the text of the blessing of "Birkas ha'Levanah." Included in the blessing are the words, "... Ateres Tiferes la'Amusei Vaten..." -- "To the moon He said that it should renew itself as a crown of glory for those carried by the womb..." RASHI explains that these words allude to the splendor of the Jewish people which, like the moon, will one day be restored to its full glory.

What is the deeper significance behind the comparison of the moon to the splendor of the Jewish people?

(a) We can understand this analogy better based on the Midrash (Shemos Rabah 15; see also RABEINU BACHYE to Bereishis 38:30, cited by SHULCHAN ARUCH OC 426:2) which teaches that just as the moon waxes and wanes over a thirty-day period, so, too, the power of the kingdom of Yisrael "waxed and waned" over a period of thirty generations. It grew for fifteen generations until it was full -- from Avraham Avinu until Shlomo ha'Melech, and then it diminished for fifteen generations, culminating in the reign of Tzidkiyahu ha'Melech, whose eyes were blinded by the enemy at the time of the destruction of the Beis ha'Mikdash (Yirmeyahu 52:11), a sign of the complete loss of the light of the moon. The return of the moon's light after the Molad is a sign that the dynasty of the Malchus of Beis David, too, will return to its former glory.

This concept is also reflected in the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (25a) which says that Rabbi told Rabbi Chiya that when he sanctifies the new month, he should send Rabbi a message saying, "David Melech Yisrael Chai v'Kayam." Rashi there explains that the Davidic dynasty is compared to the moon (as mentioned in Tehilim 89:37). The MAHARATZ CHIYUS cites proof from the Yerushalmi in Sanhedrin that it was indeed common practice to announce the new month with the phrase, "David Melech Yisrael..." The Chachamim viewed the new moon as a sign of hope for the rebuilding of the Davidic dynasty of Yisrael. This is also the source for the present day custom of mentioning this phrase during Birkas ha'Levanah.

(MENACHEM MESHIV NEFESH in Rosh Hashanah there cites the SHA'AR EFRA'IM (10:36) who adds in the name of the BRIS KEHUNAS OLAM that the Gematriya of "David Melech Yisrael Chai v'Kayam" is 819, the same value as the Gematriya of "Rosh Chodesh" (spelled Malei, with a Vav).)

(b) It is customary, upon completing the recitation of Hallel on Rosh Chodesh, to mention the verse "v'Avraham Zaken Ba ba'Yamim, va'Hashem Berach Es Avraham ba'Kol" -- "And Avraham was old, he had come of days, and Hashem blessed Avraham with everything" (Bereishis 24:1). What is the connection between Rosh Chodesh, or Hallel, and this verse?

The RAMBAN comments on this verse that the word "ba'Kol" is an allusion to Hashem's attribute of Malchus, Kingship. Since Avraham Avinu taught the world that Hashem is the Melech, Hashem blessed Avraham Avinu that he would represent the Malchus Shamayim in this world. Thus, we find that Avraham was accepted by all of the nations as king (see Rashi to Bereishis 14:17). Avraham's kingship was the beginning of Malchei Yisrael, as the Midrash cited above mentions, and the first of the thirty kings whose kingship followed the path of growth and diminution of the moon. Avraham Avinu merited this through teaching the praise of Hashem to the world. Therefore, on Rosh Chodesh -- the day on which we remember Hashem's promise to restore the kingdom of Yisrael to its former glory, and we sing the praises of Hashem -- we allude to Hashem's promise to revive Malchus Yisrael by reciting this verse which alludes to the birth of Malchus Yisrael. (Heard from RAV MOSHE SHAPIRO.)

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